



## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH CLAUDE M. BOLTON JR. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY FOR ACQUISITION, LOGISTICS AND TECHNOLOGY

*Interviewed by Army AL&T Executive Editor Debbie Fischer-Belous*

**Army AL&T:** How would you describe your management approach?

**Bolton:** I would describe it as a team approach. In terms of management theories, it's participatory. I like forming teams and watching them succeed.

**Army AL&T:** What do you hope to achieve during your tenure as the ASA for AL&T?

**Bolton:** I want to help the Army in its transformation efforts. We need to transform the Army, and that's been articulated through a vision statement by Army Chief of Staff GEN Eric K. Shinseki and by Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White. The challenge of transforming by the year 2010 is a mighty one, but I believe it's achievable

and I think that current progress certainly indicates that we will accomplish our goal.

Another aspect of supporting the transformation is related to programs and people in our acquisition, science, technology, and logistics areas. We must also focus on production, which is dependent on the Defense industrial base, the non-Defense industrial base, the organic industrial base, and the industrial bases abroad. Finally, I place great importance on what I call the "I" item, which is *improvement*. We must constantly improve all of the other areas I mentioned. So that's where I will focus my efforts and in turn support the transformation of the Army.

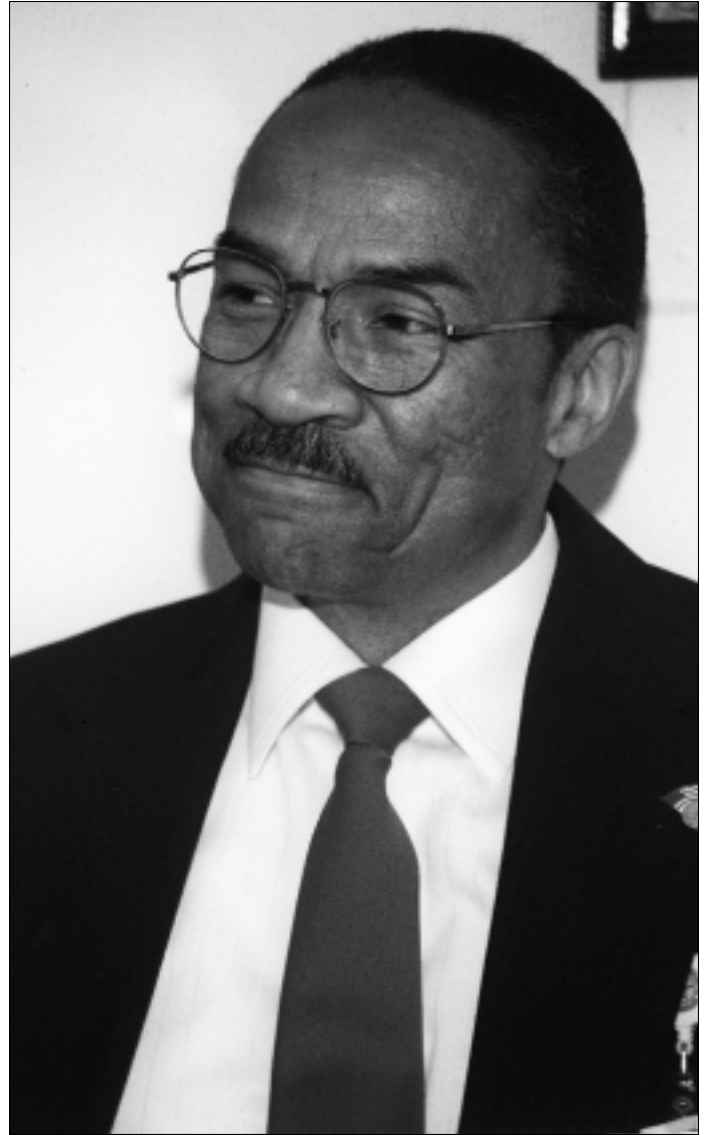
**Army AL&T:** You are a veteran of more than 30 years of Active U.S. Air Force service. What differences have you seen thus far in the way the Army conducts business?

**Bolton:** Let me tell you the things I like about the Army. First, I really like what our office symbol, AL&T, represents. You won't find AL&T in any of the other Services. You may find an A, and maybe even a T, but I don't think you'll find all three together. If an organization is going to conduct cradle-to-grave life-cycle management, its headquarters needs to adopt a policy that combines acquisition, logistics, and technology. We do that and I like it. Last August, the Army Chief of Staff put out a memo that called for reorganization of our program executive offices [PEOs] and program management offices. Subsequently, we took each program and put it under one of the PEOs, and gave project, product, and program managers [PMs] life-cycle responsibility for their programs. I don't think you'll find that in the other Services. Although we're still refining the details for this change, I fully expect it to prove very beneficial for the Army.

Another difference between the Army and the other Services is the approach taken during the initial planning stages of a program. Traditionally in the other Services, at the outset, a small number of individuals who are junior in rank and experience determine 70 to 80 percent of the final destiny of a program. My experience thus far with the Army is different. For example, since I arrived here, I have met approximately every other week with the Army Chief of Staff and other senior members of the Army leadership to discuss the Future Combat Systems, which is a key component of the Objective Force. We have addressed what the Future Combat Systems will be, its requirements, and cross-discipline issues. I believe we have the best brainpower and most experienced individuals working on this.

**Army AL&T:** In what ways did the events of September 11, 2001, impact the Army's short- and long-term acquisition goals?

**Bolton:** The transformation of the Army was going on before 9-11, and we were already working with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency on the Future Combat Systems. In addition, the Interim Armored Vehicle, which is now named Stryker, was already under development. What 9-11 did was to give us greater focus. It made us ask ourselves, "Are we doing the right things?" Yes we are, but we need to move faster and I think 9-11 caused us to do that. Thus, my focus is to put the Objective Force together as quickly as possible while simultaneously addressing the readiness of the Legacy Force, recapitalization, and the Interim Force.



September 11 *did* happen and could happen again. But there is less probability of that if we get the Objective Force out there quickly, and that motivates me.

**Army AL&T:** Since Objective Force planning predated the events of September 11, 2001, what revisions to it might be required?

**Bolton:** We must transform more quickly. The Objective Force concept was introduced approximately 3 years ago, and the Army began teaming with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency on that effort at about the same time. So it hasn't been all that long. Actually, prior to 9-11, GEN Shinseki accelerated the Objective Force effort. So now we must achieve that accelerated schedule. Our vision of what the Objective Force should be hasn't changed. It's to deploy a brigade

combat team anywhere in the world in 96 hours after liftoff, a division on the ground in 120 hours, and five divisions on the ground in theater in 30 days. That requires a massive change in what we're doing.

**Army AL&T:** One of your prior assignments was Commandant of the Defense Systems Management College. What, specifically, do you think the Army needs to do relative to training and educating its civilian and military acquisition workforce?

**Bolton:** The people and programs part of what I talked about earlier is extremely important. In fact, people are key to the success of the Objective Force. During the next few years, we're going to rely greatly on Defense Acquisition University [DAU] President Frank Anderson and his folks to provide us the education and training we need to make the Objective Force a reality. We will also rely on DAU to help us with continuous improvements to the Objective Force. Continuous improvements will be necessary because, as September 11 taught us, our adversaries are clever and change quickly, and we also need to be nimble and capable of changing quickly. Thus, the Objective Force will continue to evolve to be able to address any enemy, at any time, anywhere. That is why our folks must be in a continuous learning environment. As such, we'll be working with DAU and with colleges and universities to make that happen. The bottom line is that members of our workforce who are involved in acquisition, sustainment, and science and technology must keep on learning.

**Army AL&T:** You also served earlier in various program executive officer and program manager assignments. What "lessons learned" might you offer to individuals considering such tours today?

**Bolton:** Let me start by stating that I've enjoyed every one of those assignments. They haven't always been easy, but I think I've learned most from the assignments that were not easy. In fact, I guess I would say they were all challenging. Some of the lessons learned that I would suggest are as follows:

- Have a requirement,
- Know your requirement,
- Know who your customer is and form a good relationship,
- Know how to relate to Congress and the media, and
- Know the history of your program.

Relative to knowing about the history of your program, I want to note that there is very little acquisition, logistics, and technology work being done today by the Army or the other Services that is totally new. Somewhere, someplace, someone else has already done what we're doing. It could be the other Services, it could be in industry, or it could be halfway around the world. It is important to recognize that. And when all else is said and done, and you've learned the lessons listed above, perhaps the most important thing is keep a sense of humor and stay healthy.





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**Army AL&T:** What impact do you believe the Headquarters, Department of the Army reorganization will have on your operations?

**Bolton:** We will be smaller, smarter, and faster, and I think that applies across the entire headquarters. I think the rationale behind the reorganization and the downsizing is correct. However, as I stated to some of our personnel yesterday during a briefing, the reorganization will not be easy because some folks in our organization may be impacted. Some may actually retire, so we'll provide incentives for them. In general, people just don't like change, especially changes like this that occur so quickly. I will be as supportive as I can and try to minimize the impact on our personnel. But in the end we will have to reassess, reinvent, re-engineer, remake, and redo ourselves so that we can do what we are charged to do in this office to support not only the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff, but also the soldier in the field.

**Army AL&T:** From your perspective, what do you think is the greatest challenge to the Army's successful transformation?

**Bolton:** Us! The only thing that stands in our way is ourselves. As I mentioned earlier, humans do not like change unless there is a calamity staring them right in the face. We don't necessarily have a calamity, but we must realize that we all need to change. We are fortunate to have good leaders who understand that we need to

change and create the Objective Force, and it's up to the rest of us to make that happen.

**Army AL&T:** Is there anything else you'd like to add?

**Bolton:** It's hard to get this across in an article, but I want to emphasize that if people see what's going on in Afghanistan today, they will realize the need for the Army. The Air Force, the Navy, and our Special Forces have also done a tremendous job in Afghanistan. Ultimately, to get the last enemy, we need boots on the ground. We need soldiers who are trained to go in and dig out an enemy who does not want to be dug out. I look at what we're trying to do with the Objective Force and I believe that if we had that Objective Force today it would make a world of difference. So I see a great sense of urgency to get on with what we're doing. The longer we wait, the harder it is on our soldiers. So, fielding the Objective Force is paramount.

The other thing I want to add is that I am having an absolutely super time. I've been with the Army and in this position for only a couple of months. I've received tremendous support from the Secretary of the Army, the Army Chief of Staff, the entire Army staff, and the men and women I've had the pleasure of meeting in the field. So, the transition from one Service to the other and from one uniform to the other has been great. I feel part of a team and I enjoy being here. I look forward to keeping our Army the most powerful, the most capable, and the most respected Army the world has ever seen.